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CHAPTER MEETING ON THE PENINSULA MAY 30, 1997

# THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: A DYNAMIC OF POPULATION VS. NATURAL RESOURCES DAVID G. HOWELL, FN-86

6:00 PM, Wine and snacks at Liebowitz', 175 Fox Hollow lane, Woodside  
7:45 PM, Dinner at Il Fornaio Restaurant, Garden Court Hotel,  
520 Cowper St., Palo Alto CA. 7:30 PM (valet parking.)  
8:45 PM. Program begins

**David Howell**, research geophysicist with the U.S. Geological Survey, Menlo Park, CA, has spent much of his career studying the natural characteristics of China, and how they relate to its development as a society, especially in the 20th century. His presentation will trace how China's geological development and "ultimate" topography has dictated the course of its peoples, and its probable political agenda into the 21st century.

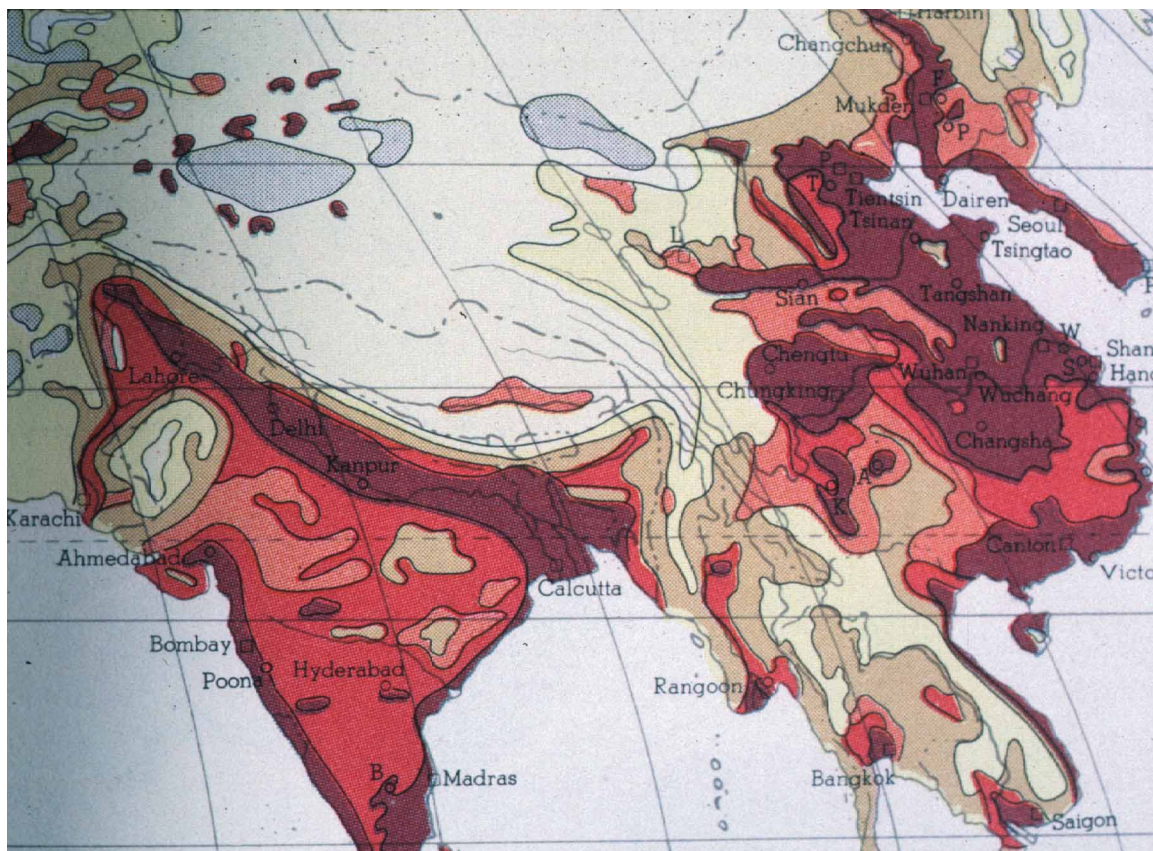


## ABOUT THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

David G. Howell received his BA from Colgate University, and a Ph.D. from University of California, Santa Barbara. Except for three years in military service, he has spent essentially his entire professional career doing research for the US Geological Survey. Since 1974 his research has involved the growth and shaping of continents- what we know as tectonics- and how these forces may help explain the world-wide distribution of oil and gas. This work led to study of the physical development of that portion of eastern Asia that became China, and to the study of the relationship between China's physical characteristics and its political development, particularly in this century. Dr. Howell's presentation will explain the geophysical basis for events occurring in modern-day China, and its probable political agenda for the 21st century.

China is roughly the size of the United States. Its population, however, is at least four times larger. Furthermore, 90 percent of its people live on only 30 percent of its land. The western <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> of China is characterized by searing deserts, intervening glaciated mountains, and the high Tibetan plateau. Here, the average elevation is equivalent to that of the highest peaks from the Rockies to the Sierra Nevada. Other than a few springs at high elevations, there is no potable water in this entire western region. In spite of this paradoxical confluence of difficulties, the population of China has been continuing to grow slightly, and its economy is increasing at the rate of 10 percent per year since 1980.

With domestic petroleum production in sharp decline, and other natural resources in scant supply for such a population, what may seem like unrelated phenomena have conspired to dictate China's needs and its plans to meet those needs. Howell will graphically demonstrate the facts of life for the Chinese people. He will provide for us an unique insight into what seem like conflicting actions on the part of the Chinese Government, with a



*Map depicting the general distribution of population centers in the People's Republic of China and adjoining areas. Note the vast empty territories encompassing the western two thirds of China. Interestingly, the Chinese refer to the Sichuan basin, the densely populated area EAST of Tibet, as "western" China.*



plausible explanation for its actions, its apparently “hard-line” attitude when dealing with its people and with the outside world, and the direction of its development.

Howell is a member of a number of scientific societies, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Geological Society of America. During his tenure with the USGS he has taught

Byrd Coast, and a stint of 14 months at Byrd Station Antarctica. By 1971, when he spent the summer on Baffin Island, he had met and married his wife, Dana, who has become a geological ice expert in her own right. Dana and Bill have both climbed Mt. McKinley, though at different times. Dana’s expedition was an all-woman team. Bill and Dana have both become expert kayakers and have

made several sea-kayak trips in Greenland, Glacier Bay, and North Baffin Island, this last in 1996.

In the past few years Bill has become interested in, and an expert on, environmental clean-up, and has become involved with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, in which he has been assisting in the assessment of the health risks associated with the known sunken Russian nuclear submarines.

Bill explained his latest venture, which he calls “Sustainable Energy for the Arctic.” Recognizing that there is little



*The stark, majestic granite peaks of the Yellow Mountains in Eastern China. Despite the enormous population in eastern China, the area is mountainous, forcing a concentration of peoples along river valleys and coastal lowlands. The mountains impede regional transportation, isolate population centers, and with mountains, there are earthquakes.*

at Stanford University, the University of Otago, University of Paris, and he is now Concurrent Professor at Nanjing University, P.R.C.

## LAST MONTH’S SPEAKER

**Bill Isherwood, FN-70**, Vice Chair of the Northern California Chapter, presented his impressions of the changes which have occurred in the inhabited areas of the North, based on his 15 trips to the Arctic, including Arctic Alaska, over the past 35 years. Bill’s first trip to the Arctic occurred during the summer of 1962, when he was working at his first job for the US Geological Survey in Alaska. This “hooked” him on the Arctic, and on ice. His expertise being in geophysical means of studying ice thickness and in techniques for assessing the rock below the ice, he was able to spend the first several seasons on the St. Elise Icefield, the Queen Maud Plateau, and the

source for energy in the Arctic (and Antarctic), he has been working with the Inuit peoples to make use of the one inexhaustible energy source in the Arctic, the wind. The Prudhoe oil field was a fine energy source, but one which was tapped and emptied to feed the insatiable appetite of the US for fossil fuel. Modern peoples all over the globe, even those thought by complex societies to be “backward”. are in need of good energy sources. There is no question, for example, that the ski-mobile provides a better mode of transport in the Arctic and Antarctic regions than the dog team, or that the refrigerator is a better way to keep food edible than burial in the polar ice-cap. But these innovations both require forms of energy which the indigenous peoples have little of. If the Inuit, and the Athabaska, and the Lapps could harness the

energy of the ever-present wind, they would have access to a **sustainable form of energy**. This is the thrust of Bill's latest efforts.

Bill utilized many photos taken over the years to dramatize the changes which have occurred wherever there is habitation in the Polar regions, and pressed home the point that human life and habitation are possible in these stern and forbidding areas, so long as sources of energy are found to make it possible. For continued habitation, however, the energy sources must be sustainable, which, in the long run as well as the short run, is essential to continued habitation and development.

### **GARDEN PARTY ON HOLD FOR NOW**

In keeping with tradition, we will try to have a garden party in June. We will be unable to have this event at Erna Baldwin's this year but we will work on getting another site. We will keep you posted if we work out another location.



*A view of the Grand Canal in northern China. Water in China is unevenly distributed. Water is of fundamental importance for drinking, agricultural irrigation, and transportation, hydroelectric generation. Flooding is also a major potential hazard. These hydrologic attributes commonly compete one with the other.*

### **NEWS OF MEMBERS**

**Leslie Ewing, FN-93**, recently was elected President of her professional association, the California Shore and Beach Preservation Association. The California Chapter is the largest State chapter of the American Shore and Beach Association. Members are mostly coastal engineers, geologists and oceanographers. They publish a regular newsletter, have quarterly dinner meetings and there is an annual conference and field trip. This year the annual meeting will be held in Santa Barbara in November. The group recently has sponsored legislation for beach enhancement, which has taken its program from being busy to a state of hyperdrive.

Leslie says, "I've been in this job only three weeks, but already appreciate, more than ever before, the smooth workings of the Explorers Club."

**John Rutherford, MN-92**, and Millicent, report that they were more of the California Contingent present at the ECAD in New York on March 22, 1997, though the dining space was so large it was almost impossible to find other Northern California friends. They believe Steve Smith was at their table. This was the Rutherfords' second visit, in consecutive years. The Rutherfords were most impressed with the EXOTICS hors d'oeuvres event, held in two large rooms before the dinner, at which a large circular table set up in the center of the room was laden with exotic hors d'oeuvres, including Asiatic spring rolls, blue rice, sweet rice, water buffalo, and many other unusual foods. This table of unusual hors d'oeuvres has become a cornerstone of the ECAD, with an array of edibles not seen anywhere else, at least in this country.

When they sat down at their table, an exotic gold coin emblazoned with the Explorers Club emblem was at each place. This was later found to be edible chocolate, rather than negotiable.

The speakers during and after the dinner were as fascinating and exotic as the rest of the evening. All in all, the Rutherfords recommend the ECAD for at least one visit for any member, and they hope to go again on their next visit to New York.

**Bob Wolcott, FI-65**, and his wife, Karolee, have written that they had hoped they might be able to come to the Garden Party this June. They expect to travel from their sheep ranch, "Talgarno Park", via Cavendish, Victoria 3314, Australia, to the US, to attend Bob's 40th high school reunion (Piedmont High School) on Saturday, June 14. The Wolcotts reported that they were presently feeding 5000 sheep (for fine wool) on their sheep property, the weather was very dry, and their decision to travel to this country depended very much on when the rainy season begins. With an early rainfall, and good breaks, the sheep should be able to fend for themselves. Their plans called for being in this country from June 10 to June 18.

**Webmaster Mike Diggles** has received an e-mail message from **Josep A. Pujante, FI-96**, of Barcelona, Spain, expressing his pride and satisfaction at being admitted to membership in the Explorers Club, and being able to assist on the ECAD in March. He reported this news to King Juan Carlos of Spain, as he is one of only two Spanish adventurers who are members of this Club. Pujante summited Everest in 1993, exactly 40 years after Hillary's first successful climb. For this trip Hillary was named Honorary Leader. Pujante is presently planning a climb of K-2 for next year, and will carry the Explorers Club Flag with him. In 2000, he plans to climb Annapurna, and Maurice Herzog (a French mountaineer, the first climber to summit Annapurna, in 1950) will be honorary leader of that expedition. He is also preparing a project, "Seven Islands", in which he will attempt to scale the highest peaks of the seven largest islands on the globe.

## THE DANCING PYGMY

**Dan Liebowitz, MN-66**, submits this report on **Harkhuf, the first recorded ancient Egyptian explorer of sub-Saharan Africa**.

"During a recent trip to Egypt, Rusty and I climbed Quebbet el Hawa ("the voice of the wind") on the west bank of the Nile at Aswan, 550 miles south of Cairo. The cliffs there contain numerous tombs, reputed to be the resting places of Old Kingdom nobles. To reach them we had to cross the Nile on a felucca, a single-masted sailing vessel manned by a crew of two, then climb a narrow and

treacherous path to the tombs. I had read that Harkhuf, a caravan leader and explorer who lived in the 6th dynasty, around 2,280 B.C.E., was buried in tomb #34.

"We identified the right tomb, #34, but found that the tomb no longer contained Harkhuf's mummy, having been robbed, like so many others over the centuries. But there were hieroglyph texts on the door jams, and others inside the tomb, explaining the wall paintings, some of which still had the original vibrant terra-cotta, blue, green and yellow colors of ancient Egypt.

"Harkhuf had conducted several expeditions on the upper Nile, through the maze of channels and floating papyrus islands called the Sudd, which was a feat in itself. But he also penetrated beyond the Sudan, for hieroglyphics tell us that "never had any companion or caravan leader done it before."

"Harkhuf brought back exotic products from his journeys: skins of strange animals never before seen in Egypt, ostrich feathers, gold, ivory tusks, incense, resins, and ebony. During his last journey he must have penetrated as far south and west as the Ituri forest, in what is present day Zaire, where he captured, or perhaps traded for, a pygmy. This was no ordinary pygmy, but a dancing pygmy, whom he took back as a slave to Aswan. The hieroglyphics tell us he sent a courier ahead of him with a message to the young Pharaoh, Pepi II, that he was bringing a gift of a dancing pygmy. The Pharaoh sent a messenger back stating that the pygmy should be guarded at all costs to prevent such a valuable treasure from falling overboard. Or, at least that's what the hieroglyphs say.

"As far as I can determine, this is the first recorded evidence that the ancient Egyptians, as explorers as well as slave dealers, reached central Africa over four thousand years ago."

**Don Johansen, FN-76**, reports that the Institute for Human Origins, presently in Berkeley, CA, will soon be moving to Tempe, AZ, where Arizona State University is erecting a building to house the Institute. Don will be doing teaching and research in paleontology there after his move.

## A CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Last winter in Costa Rica was particularly rainy, and that was capped off with a hurricane that slammed into the country, causing much havoc, heavy river run-off and flooding. And that is one explanation given for the fact that **David Smith, MN-83** found himself face to face with a crocodile while taking his morning swim in the ocean off Manuel Antonio Beach, there, in December.

## I HEARD IT ON THE INTERNET

A solicitation.

A hearing aid manufacturer in Denmark, *Oticon*, is looking for explorers/adventurers with hearing loss, who would be willing to be interviewed for feature news stories about how hearing loss does not necessarily have to prevent someone from living a **very** active life. Anyone who consents to be interviewed, and fills the needs of the company, will get fitted with a new, fully digitized hearing aid(s). Called DigiFocus, it is actually a tiny computer worn in the ear, and is a major revolution in hearing enhancement technology, according to first users.

The theme of the news stories will be how these adventurers get the most out of life, what their adventuresome lives entail currently, what sounds are important to them to hear, etc. The manufacturer believes hearing loss is often mistakenly associated with the onset of passivity in life, and many venturesome and vigorous activities, such as canoeing, scuba diving, hang-gliding, etc. are quite compatible with compensated hearing loss.

This is not an "official" request to the Explorers Club, but if anyone who reads this article is interested in the concept, and possibly in a new advanced-design hearing aid, the person to contact is **Kurt Pizer**, an L.A. journalist, whose e-mail address is **106350.1241@compuserve.com**

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## BUSINESS MEETING OF APRIL 21, 1997.

A business meeting was held beginning at 7:00 PM on April 21, at the home of Treasurer Jerry Athearn in Berkeley.

Present were: Bob Schmieder, Chairman, Jerry Athearn, Treasurer, Charlie Geraci, Secretary, Bill Isherwood, Vice Chairman, Mike Diggles, Webmaster, Mort Beebe, Leslie Ewing, Eve Iversen, Ron Reuther, and Ann Bessey.

Chairman Schmieder opened the meeting by explaining the difficulties in having a business meeting prior to the dinner meetings. He, himself, finds it difficult to arrive in San Francisco by the appointed hour of 6:00 PM, as do others. Additionally, Schmieder has made a conscious effort to limit discussion of business items, to the extent possible, at these meetings, to avoid distracting



The croc proceeded to clamp down on his right arm. Without thinking, he punched the croc in the mouth, whereupon inexplicably the animal released its hold, and blood began pouring from the five lacerations in his arm. After the encounter he reached the beach without the animal following him, called for help, and was taken to a hospital in San Jose, where he was treated and subsequently released.

Smith says he does not know why the croc did not pursue him further, except that it may have been surprised by the blow it received, or may have seen that its prey was larger than its instincts first told it..

Smith, who has scaled the Matterhorn, bicycled through the Arabian desert, kayaked down the Nile, been thrown by a bull during a bullfight in Spain, and swum the Mediterranean from Europe to Africa, has never before been surprised by such an unusual occurrence.

Was he frightened? "I'm not fearless.," he said, "But I didn't freeze with fear. I do get frightened. I just don't let those things stop me. I've seen that croc's face thousands of times since in my mind. It's not a scary feeling, not a bad feeling, but it's just that I still see. it."



from the enjoyment of the speaker. Schmieder promised that future such meetings would receive plenty of advance notice in the Newsletter. Business meeting reports will be made in the Newsletter after such sessions.

The agenda items discussed are enumerated below:

1. Though **dues** were discussed, the decision was to not change the present dues structure. That is, there will continue to be no Chapter dues. Receipt of a small portion of the application fee for new members, and a small surplus from dinner meeting receipts, have so far been sufficient to finance

production of the Newsletter and the few small memorial student grants of importance to the Chapter.

2. There was discussion of the perception by some Chapter members that this is a San Francisco, rather than a Northern California, Chapter. The discussion involved how meetings or other events could be held in other parts of northern California to involve members to the north, the south and, particularly, east of San Francisco. Possibilities discussed were an occasional Saturday meeting held in Chico, or north of there, in the eastern Sacramento Valley, or even in the Sierra region

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Again this May, as in years past, the Peninsula meeting will again begin with a cocktail party hosted by **Dan (MN-66) and Rusty Liebowitz** at their home in Woodside. The party will be followed again this year with dinner and the speaker at the Garden Court Hotel in Palo Alto. The food for the gathering will be provided by Il Fornaio Cucino Italiana which is located in the same building. Valet parking is free (a two-dollar tip is nice, though).

**Location of cocktail party at Dan (MN-66) and Rusty Liebowitz's house in Woodside.**

175 Fox Hollow Road  
Woodside  
(415) 851-2171

**Directions:** See the map for details.

- **From North:** S. on 280 to Highway 84; west on 84 about 3/4 mile to the village, and straight on past another half mile to Fox Hollow Road which is on the left. The Liebowitz's house is near the end on the left.
- **From East:** W. on Hwy. 84 across the Dumbarton Bridge, stay on the Bayfront Expressway to where it becomes Marsh Road and meets Hwy. 101. Take 101 one exit north to Hwy 84 west/Woodside Road. Follow 84 about 4 miles through Redwood City, under the Hwy. 280 freeway and proceed as above.
- **From South:** North on 280 and exit on 84 and proceed as above or north on 101 and proceed as second paragraph above.

**Location of dinner meeting and speaker presentation at Garden Court Hotel in Palo Alto**

520 Cowper Street  
Palo Alto  
(415) 322-9000

**Directions from Liebowitz's**

- go back east on Hwy. 84 to El Camino Real
- turn south on El Camino and drive about 5 miles to Palo Alto
- Take the University Avenue exit off El Camino and turn left ("east") on University
- Take University less than a mile through town to Cowper Street
- Turn right on Cowper, go half a block. The hotel and free valet parking are on the right

**Directions for those who meet us at Garden Court:**

- **From North:** S. on 101 to University Avenue exit ("west"), drive to Cowper Street, turn left, the hotel is half a block down on the right
- **From East:** W. on Hwy. 84 across the Dumbarton Bridge, turn left at the first signal after the bridge which is University Avenue. Proceed over Hwy. 101 into Palo Alto to Cowper Street, the hotel is half a block down on the right
- **From South:** North on 101 to University Avenue exit ("west"), drive to Cowper Street, turn left, the hotel is half a block down on the right



Garden Court Hotel  
520 Cowper Street

Liebowitz's  
175 Fox Hollow Road



or Lake Tahoe area , to accommodate the numbers of members in the eastern Sacramento Valley, and east to Reno Any events held in a location apart from the immediate Bay Area would require that those members living in or near that location assume responsibility for developing and producing the program Such an event could be in the form of simply a Saturday evening dinner meeting with speaker or other entertainment, or a field trip of interest to other Northern California members. It was decided to explore, through this Newsletter (*see below*) the interest of the more peripheral Northern California Chapter members, with the possibility that one of the dates now being planned for the 1997-1998 season would be set aside for this purpose.

3. Chairman Schmieder also discussed the possibility of another **GOLDEN GATEAWAY**. He feels that this should become a biennial event, held in the Fall, and not competing with the ECAD, and generally following the format of the original Gateway. This sentiment was echoed by the members who had attended the Gateway. Schmieder reported that the New York Office of the Club has expressed its support of our effort, and has offered to supply technical and organizational support, though the distance is too great for supplying “man”power support. Schmieder’s preference is for establishing a rotating Gateway

Committee, which would utilize experienced members with the addition, each time, of newer members who could become the leaders for the next Gateway. He also felt that corporate support would also be available, which could help considerably with the financial success of the venture. The books have not yet been closed on the first Gateway, but it appears the event will have broken even”, though not have actually made a profit.

4. Schmieder also queried the group on interest in promoting a fall event in the “off” years, such as fall, 1997 (to be called the **Golden GET-away?**), which would include perhaps a couple of “forays” during the day on a Saturday, followed by a more-than-usually-exotic dinner with entertainment that evening, held at a choice dinnerhouse or hotel. Those present approving the concept, it will be discussed at future meetings of the membership.

#### INTERESTED, ANYONE?

Any Northern California Chapter member who lives in the areas north, south or east of San Francisco, and who has ideas for a Northern California Chapter event which would be held in your general area, with any specific recommendations for type of event, day-of-week, speaker, if any, etc., is encouraged to contact Bob Schmieder. Schmieder has asked out-lying members of



*A glimpse of the 1500-km wide Taklamakan Desert of western China. The desert is bounded by the northern and southern Silk Routes, and has itself a Uyghur name that means “when you go in you don’t come out”.*

the Chapter to contact him, by fax or e-mail, Jerry Athearn, by phone or mail, or Bill Isherwood, by fax or e-mail, (see your roster,) with your comments on these questions, and particularly whether you are interested in helping produce a meeting at a site distant from San Francisco. Please include any concrete ideas for the type of event you might have in mind, and how it can be publicized to encourage members from afar to take a weekend to visit your area. If such an event is to be held in the upcoming Chapter year, a date will have to be reserved on the Chapter meeting schedule by this summer, as the schedule begins to become set by the time of the first fall meeting, which is expected to occur on September 26, this year. If you have a plan which could be executed this summer, you should notify us immediately as summer plans are already under way for many of our members. Otherwise, such an event could be planned, for example as a field trip, for later 1997 or early 1998

#### TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 1997-1998

The following are the tentative dates set for meetings during the 1997-1998 fall, winter and spring seasons:

Sept. 26, 1997

October 25 or 31, 1997

December 5, 1997

January 23, 1998

February 27, 1998

March 27, 1998,

April 24, 1998

May 29, 1998,

June 20 or 27, 1998 ( Garden Party)

This schedule will be updated, with subjects , as your Vice Chairman firms up the programs for the next year.

#### QUOTES OF THE MONTH (excerpted from EXPEDITION NEWS)

"It's important to demystify historic milestones and show people...the real joy of small accomplishments, like navigating a difficult harbor in fog, or being able to finally tie a knot correctly - that a series of small events can tie together to make something big happen." (Hodding Carter, writing about the voyage of Lief Ericcson.)

"You can't be first on Everest, or first to the north pole, or to the south pole, anymore, but you can seek out challenges which are new, unusual, or handled differently from the straightforward challenges, such as getting to the top of a specific mountain." (Sir Edmund Hillary, speaking recently in Sydney, Australia.)

"Everest doesn't attract a whole lot of well-balanced folks. The self-selection process tends to weed out the cautious and the sensible in favor of those who are single-minded and incredibly driven." (Jon Krakauer, Everest '96 climber.)

**INTERESTING FACT:** The northernmost bit of land on earth is Oodaaq Island. This 82-square foot island lies about three miles north of Greenland, and 400 miles from the North Pole. Because of fluctuations in the level of the sea in this region, the size of the island varies considerably. This bit of land is named after Comdr. Robert E. Peary's Eskimo assistant on his 1909 North Pole expedition. (From a LIFE magazine photo essay by Galen Rowell.)

*Please return to:*

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**MAIL BY Tuesday, May 20, 1997**

Please reserve spaces for the **David Howell talk**, at the **Garden Court Hotel in Palo Alto** on Friday, May 30, 1997.

\$40/person... \$45 if postmarked after May. 23.  
Cocktails at Dr. Dan's 6:00 PM, Dinner, 7:45 PM, Speaker, 8:45 PM.

Guest(s):